Karnataka Projects Pending for Approval

2128. SHRI K. REHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) What are the various projects in Karnataka pending before the Central Government till 31st October, 1995 for approval;

(b) What action has been taken by Government to clear the projects and what is the status of each of the projects as on 31st October, 1995; and

(c) how many projects are pending for more than one year and the reasons for keeping approval pending, project-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAVA): (a) No projects for the State of Karnataka is pending approval in the Planning Commission.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Border Trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh

2129. SHRI JOYANTA ROY:
DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATILA

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some recommendations have been made for opening of border trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Indian Institutre of Foreign Trade has formed a strategy to promote border trade with Myanmar;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether opening of border trade with Myanmar and Banladesh will be limited to some items in the first phase; and will not encourage torrorism in the region; and

(f) if so, the details thereof with steps to be taken to check the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) In pursuance of the Border Trade Agreement concluded with Myanmar in January, 1994, Border Trade with Myanmar has already been operationalised with effect from 12th April, 1995 from March in Manipur corresponding to Tamu in Myanmar. With Bangladesh, however, no formal arrangements for Border Trade have yet been worked out while awaiting concurrence of Bangalesh Government to India's proposals in this regard.

(c) and (d) IIFT have made a survey of the export opportunities in Myanmar which inter-alia indicates the scope for expansion Border Trade with Myanmar, the potential items of export to Myanmar, etc.

(e)and (f) Trade with Myanmar across the Border may be undertaken in all products as permitted in the Export-Import Policy. In respect of Bangladesh, the Question does not arise at this stage, in view of position given above at (a) & (b). It is expected that operationalisation of Border Trade with Myanmarl would give a fillip to economic development activities in the Border regions and thereby contribute to stability in the region by a reduction in social tensions.

Export of Agricultural Products

2130. SHRI SARDA MOHANTY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the couintries to which agricultural products were being exported;

(b) whether there has been a sharp decline in the export of Agricultural products during the last three years;

(c) if so, the reasons for decline in the exports;

(d) the efforts made to increase agricultural exports to different countries; and

the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Agricultural products are mainly exported to the USA, Canda, Germany, France, UK, Russia, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore and countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

(b) The total value of exports of agricultural and allied products (excluding coffee, tea, raw cotton and marine products during the last three years have been as follows:

Year	Value (In Rs. Crores)
1992-93	5686.81
1993-94	7532.99
1994-95	7049.05

(Source: DGCI&S, Caluctta)

(c) The decline in export during 1994-95 was mainly due to reduced import of basmati rice by Saudi Arabia on account of large carryover stocks, diminished purchase of tobacco by Russia and decline in oilmeal exports on account of reduction of domestic soyabean crop.

(b) and (e) Steps taken to enhance export of agricultural products include simplification of inspection procedures, removal of Minimum Expoprt Price and quuantity restrictions on selected items, provision of concessional credit, product development to meet international needs, extention of benefits available under the scheme of EOUs/EPZs to agriculture sector and permitting 50% sale in the domestic tariff area, free import of raw cashewnuts for augmenting domestic supply, suspension of 2% export cess upto 31.3.96 on export of pepper, support @ Rs. 20/- per kg. for meeting most of export of 600 MTs of cardamom exported by air in consumer packs to middle East destinations between 1.12.95 to 31.12.95, support to cardamom exporters @ Rs. 35 per kg. for export of 600 MTs of cardamom during the period 1.12.95 to meet the export development cost, suspension of 2% export cess of cardamom upto 31.3.96, air freight subsidy on export of specified permissible products to specified destinations, provision of cold stores at airporets.

Demand to Ban Tobacco Trade

2131. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Experts urge India to ban tobacco trade" as reported in Statesman dated 7th November, 1995;

(b) if so, whether there has been a persistent demand to ban tobacco trade; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Representations have been received for restricting tobacco trade. Ministry of Health has set up an Export Committee to undertake a comparative study on the economics of tobacco use; inter alia examining the tax revenue and foreign exchange earnings; employment and consumer expenditure on the one hand and the cost of tertiary level medical care facilities for treatment of tobacco related diseases; losses due to fire-hazard; ecological damage due to deforestation and disposal of tobacco related waste with a view to study the economic impact of tobacco consumption.